

# Early Day Newspapers Fanned Freedom's Fire

(The following article was written for National Newspaper Week by Bob Considine, nationally celebrated newspaperman and author. National Newspaper Week celebrated during the week of Oct. 14 to 20.)

This is as good a time as any to bury an obsolete metaphor. It is the one that runs, "... dead as yesterday's newspaper."

There are deader jewels in the crown of America's freedom of speech and communication. A live TV or radio show's deader one second after presentation is completed than, let us say, the bound copy of the December 23, 1773, edition of the Massachusetts Gazette and Boston Newsletter—which carried well-written accounts of the dumping of 342 chests of tax-bearing tea.

Freshly printed copies of those papers, carried to New York and Philadelphia by a courier named Revere, and dispatched thence as far south as Georgia, united and strengthened the will of the colonies as much as did the Massachusetts Spy's stories of May 3, 1775, covering the action in the battles of Lexington and Concord.

THE HISTORIAN winces and knows no solace when he considers the events in ancient history, which will forever remain obscure as to origin and other details because there was no newspaper there to blot up and retain the details.

Because there were no newspapers we'll never know really what happened in England in 1066, in Virginia in 1607, and in Massachusetts in 1620. But nothing much has happened since then that went unnoticed. Newspapers, and the knowledge they spread and—once read—enabled others to spread by being passed on, fanned freedom's fire into independence from Britain. We are not in the dark today about what Lincoln did and said at Gettys-

burg because the story that day was covered by dozens of reporters.

IF THERE HAD been no newspapers, say, from 1879 to the present time, could there have been the development and acceptance of the automobile, electric light, airplane, telephone, highway system, radio, TV, modern medicine? Could there have been comprehen-

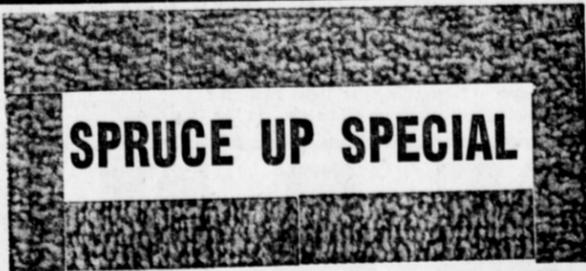
sion of the forces that brewed into the wars of that period, clear focus on the leaders, dedicated and despotic, who strode the world?

Newspapers make a big difference in people's lives every day.

THEY TRANSLATE the incomprehensibly complex nature of the world today into language and pictures that

most children can understand and by which the intelligence of the adult will not be offended. They explained Suez to the reader, and the best way of inflating a souffle. They probe the Antarctic and the atom, shed light on cancer and calypso, take you to the White House and the white tower hamburger place, the Kremlin and Klub Kit-Kat, delineate Einstein and Epstein, illuminate budget and baseball, range through acidosis to zither-playing.

Yes, newspapers make a big difference in people's lives every day.



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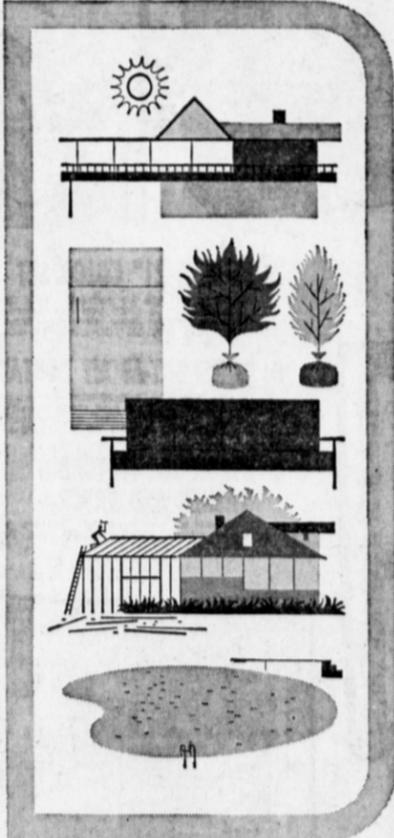
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